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HAVE YOURSELF A DEADLY LITTLE CHRISTMAS!
--THE BLOCKBUSTER

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CHRISTMAS EVE IN GOTHAM: UPTOWN, THE STREETS ARE FILLED WITH LAST-MINUTE SHOPPERS AND THE CHEERING JINGLE OF CHIMES--

--BUT HERE, IN THE FORGOTTEN PART OF THE CITY, THE STREETS ARE ALMOST DESERTED, SAVE FOR A HANDFUL OF SCAVENGERS AND THEIR UNFORTUNATE VICTIM...

...AND THE VERY SPECIAL SORT OF VENGEANCE WHICH LURKS IN THE SHELTERING SHADOWS!

ORPHANED AS A CHILD WHEN HIS PARENTS WERE KILLED BEFORE HIS EYES, BRUCE WAYNE TRAINED HIMSELF TO WAGE RELENTLESS WAR AGAINST CRIME AS THE DREAD AVENGER OF THE NIGHT...

THE BATMAN

CREATED BY BOB KANE

NO... OH, NO...!

HAVE YOURSELF A DEADLY LITTLE CHRISTMAS!

writer - LEN WEIN
artists - JOHN CALNAN & FRANK McLAUGHLIN
coloring - GLYNIS WEIN • lettering - BEN ODA
editor - JULIUS SCHWARTZ

S-3059

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PLEASE...DON'T *DO* THIS--! EVERY *PENNY* I HAVE IN THE *WORLD* IS IN THAT POCKETBOOK!

PLEASE...OH, PLEASE...

DON'T YOU *WORRY* NONE, DOLL--WE GOT GOOD *USE* FOR THAT *GREEN!*

YOU HAVE A *MERRY CHRISTMAS* NOW, HEAR?

HA HA HA HA

THAT'S *IT*... IT'S ALL *OVER*. I'VE *TRIED*... GOD *KNOWS* I'VE TRIED...

...BUT I JUST HAVEN'T GOT THE *STRENGTH* TO GO ON *FIGHTING* ANYMORE!

WHAT WAS *WITH* THAT CHICK? WE COULD'A DONE A WHOLE LOT *WORSE* THAN JUST SNATCH HER *PURSE!*

HOW'D WE *DO*, JOEY?

FIVE BUCKS?!?

ALL WE GOT WAS FIVE LOUSY *BUCKS?!?*

C'MON--LET'S GET *OUTA* HERE!

MAYBE *UPTOWN* WE CAN STILL FIND US A PLUMP *PIGEON* WITH A WALLET FULL'A *CHRISTMAS SHOPPIN' CASH!*

THE NIGHT IS *YOUNG*, AN' WE'RE STILL... *HUH?*

WHAT WAS *THAT?*

KROOM

RRAR

GGHH

YA GOT *ME*, JOEY!

BUT *WHATEVER* IT IS--IT'S *RIP-ROARIN' MAD!*

DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE *DOIN'* HERE, SUCKER, BUT YOU GOT THREE SECONDS TO *SPLIT*--

--BEFORE WE SPLIT YER *SKULL!*

THE MASSIVE MUTE'S RESPONSE IS *INSTANTANEOUS*--

CRAK

CRUNCH

--AND MOST *EMPHATIC!*

CRIPES--THIS FREAK'S AS STRONG AS *SUPERMAN!*

BUT THERE'S NO WAY HE'S AS *PUNCTURE-PROOF!*

CUT THAT SUCKER--*NOW!!*

DEADLY STEEL FLASHES THROUGH THE AIR--

CLICK

--BUT ONLY *BRIEFLY!*

KROOM

OKAY, FELLA--YOU *WIN!* YOU WANT THAT *FIVE BUCKS* WE GRABBED, YOU *GOT* IT!

ONLY JUST DON'T *HURT* ME, HUH?

ONCE AGAIN, THE BRUTE'S RESPONSE IS STRAIGHT AND *TO THE POINT...*

KRAK

THEN, ALMOST TENDERLY, THE MONSTROUS FIGURE PICKS UP THE DISCARDED *POCKETBOOK...* AND LUMBERS OFF INTO THE *NIGHT!*

THE TEARS HAVE *FROZEN* ON KATHY CRAWFORD'S CHEEKS WHEN, AT LAST, SHE RETURNS TO HER RUN-DOWN *ROOMING HOUSE*...

THE WINTER IS SO MUCH *COLDER* HERE THAN IT HAD EVER BEEN BACK HOME IN *PITTSDALE*, SHE THINKS TO HERSELF...

...ESPECIALLY *TONIGHT*...

...TONIGHT OF *ALL* NIGHTS...

HOME..."SWEET" *HOME*...

IT'S NOT REALLY MUCH TO *SHOW* FOR ALL MY EFFORTS, IS IT?

ONE MISERABLE RENTED *ROOM*... FURNISHED IN EARLY *POVERTY*.

IT SEEMED LIKE SUCH A *PROMISING* DREAM IN THE BEGINNING...MOVING TO THE *BIG CITY*...

...BEING ON *MY OWN* FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MY LIFE...

MAKING SOMETHING OF MYSELF...

I'M *SORRY*, MOMMA... DADDY...

...SORRY I'VE BEEN SUCH A *DISAPPOINTMENT* TO YOU ALL MY LIFE...

I TRIED TO BE WHAT YOU *WANTED* ME TO BE...BUT I COULDN'T EVEN SUCCEED AT BEING WHAT *I* WANTED ME TO BE...

I COULDN'T SUCCEED AT *ANYTHING*.

FORGIVE ME, FOLKS... BUT THERE'S ONLY *ONE* THING LEFT FOR ME TO *DO!*

AND, SEVERAL MINUTES *LATER*, AT GOTHAM CITY *POLICE HEADQUARTERS*...

POLICE

HELLO? SGT. *LANSKY* SPEAKING. CAN I *HELP* YOU?

NO... I ONLY CALLED BECAUSE I HAD NOBODY *ELSE* TO TALK TO...

I JUST WANTED TO SAY...

...GOOD-BYE.

CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING.

Wonder Woman vs. "THE CHEETAH"

BY HERA, THE CHEETAH'S PET IS CERTAINLY NO PUSSYCAT. BUT THEN, NEITHER IS THE CHEETAH.

NOW, YOU OVERGROWN PUSSYCAT, TAKE ME TO YOUR BOSS... THE LADY WITH THE CRIMINAL MIND.

SO THIS IS WHAT THE CHEETAH CALLS HOME. SHE'S NOT GOING TO INVITE ME IN... SOOOO

OKAY, NOW PUSSYCAT, YOU TAKE THIS LITTLE PRESENT TO YOUR MISTRESS.

MMMMM, WHAT A SMART PUSS. TO BRING ME THESE *DELICIOUS HOSTESS® CUP CAKES.*

DELICIOUS CHOCOLATY ICING. MOIST DEVIL'S FOOD CAKE.

WHILE THE CHEETAH ENJOYS HER *HOSTESS CUP CAKES*, I'LL TAKE CARE OF HER LITTLE PETS.

HOPE YOU ENJOYED YOUR *HOSTESS CUP CAKES*, CHEETAH.

I MUST TELL THE TRUTH, WONDER WOMAN. THEY WERE DELICIOUS.

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YOU CAN'T GO WRONG.. STARTING THE NEW YEAR RIGHT!

GREEN LANTERN / GREEN ARROW	BATMAN	SUPERMAN	THE BRAVE AND THE BOLD — BATMAN & PLASTIC MAN
#113	#309	#333	#148
ON SALE	ON SALE	ON SALE	ON SALE
NOV. 30TH	DEC. 14TH	DEC. 28TH	DEC. 28TH

INSTANTLY, SGT. MURRAY LANSKY STARTS *TALKING*. HIS VOICE *SOOTHING*, ALMOST *PLAINTIVE*--

--FOR HE KNOWS HE HAS TO KEEP THIS CALLER *ON THE LINE*... OR RISK *LOSING* HER FOREVER!

WHILE UPSTAIRS, IN THE OFFICE OF *POLICE COMMISSIONER JAMES W. GORDON*...

BLASTED *PAPERWORK!* EVEN ON A *HOLIDAY*, IT NEVER SEEMS TO *END!*

I SHOULD HAVE JUST LET IT *SIT THERE* UNTIL TUESDAY!

NOT *YOU*, COMMISSIONER!

YOU'RE NOT THE TYPE TO *QUIT* BEFORE THE JOB IS *DONE!*

AS THE *KIDS* SAY, BATMAN-- IT *TAKES* ONE TO *KNOW* ONE.

MERRY CHRISTMAS, OLD FRIEND.

AND THE SAME TO YOU AND *YOURS*, COMMISSIONER.

I JUST STOPPED BY FOR A MINUTE TO GIVE YOU YOUR *PRESENT*.

THE *USUAL*, I TAKE IT?

WHAT *ELSE?* SO LONG AS YOU KEEP SMOKING THAT *PIPE*, YOU'LL ALWAYS NEED *TOBACCO*.

AND *I'VE* MADE THE USUAL DONATION TO *CITY CHARITIES* IN YOUR NAME!

WE REALLY *ARE* GETTING SET IN OUR *WAYS*, AREN'T WE?

COME ON-- I'LL *WALK* YOU TO YOUR *CAR*.

AND MOMENTS LATER, AS GOTHAM'S TWO MOST FAMOUS *CRIME-FIGHTERS* STROLL TOWARDS THE *PARKING LOT*...

--AND A HAPPY HOLIDAY TO YOU, *TOO*, O'BRIEN.

EXCUSE ME, COMMISSIONER-- BUT I COULD USE A *HAND* OVER HERE!

WHAT *IS* IT, SGT. LANSKY?

A POTENTIAL *SUICIDE*, SIR-- AND A *YOUNG* ONE, FROM THE *SOUND* OF HER!

DEATH NEVER TAKES A *HOLIDAY*, DOES HE?

NOT EVEN *THIS* ONE!

DO YOU MIND IF *I* TRY TALKING TO HER, SERGEANT?

PLEASE, BATMAN-- I'M AFRAID I'M STARTING TO *LOSE* HER!

HER NAME IS *KATHY*.

KATHY? BEFORE YOU *HANG UP*, PLEASE *LISTEN* TO ME FOR A MOMENT! I HAVE A VERY IMPORTANT *QUESTION* I WANT TO ASK YOU!

I'D LIKE TO KNOW... *WHY?*

BECAUSE I'M TIRED OF WAKING UP DAY AFTER DAY TO FACE A WORLD THAT DOESN'T *WANT* ME...

BECAUSE I'M TIRED OF TRYING TO PUSH A *SNOWBALL* UP A *MOUNTAIN*...

BECAUSE I'M A *COWARD*, THAT'S WHY...

...A FRIGHTENED LITTLE COWARD.

KATHY?

KATHY!!

BLAST!--SHE *HUNG UP*! I'VE *LOST* HER!!

DID YOU MANAGE TO COMPLETE THE *TRACE*, SERGEANT?

YES, BATMAN--YOU KEPT HER ON THE LINE JUST *LONG* ENOUGH!

HERE'S HER *ADDRESS*!

I'M ON MY *WAY*! YOU'D BETTER SEND A *SQUAD CAR* AND AN *AMBULANCE* ALONG AS WELL! I'LL *MEET* THEM THERE!

ANYTHING *ELSE* WE CAN DO, BATMAN?

CONSIDERING WHAT *NIGHT* THIS IS--YOU CAN PRAY FOR A *MIRACLE*!

THE PHONE CALL WAS A *MISTAKE*, KATHY *KNOWS* THAT NOW--BUT IN A LITTLE WHILE, IT WON'T MAKE ANY REAL *DIFFERENCE*!

ALREADY THE ROOM IS BEGINNING TO *RIPPLE* AND *BLUR* AROUND HER...

...AND UNEXPECTED *NOISES* RING IN HER EARS...

HUH?

KRAM

NOK NOK

S-SOMEBODY ...KNOCKING AT THE *DOOR*...?!

PLEASE...G-GO *AWAY*... LEAVE ME *ALONE*...

...BUT THIS IS *ONE* LATE-NIGHT CALLER WHO WILL NOT BE *DENIED*!

SHYLY, LIKE SOME TIMOROUS *CHILD*, THE MONSTROUS FIGURE OFFERS KATHY HER PRECIOUS *POCKETBOOK*--

BUT IT IS A *GIFT* WHICH *COMES* FAR TOO LATE TO *HELP* HER!

FEARFULLY, THE BEHEMOTH KNEELS AT KATHY'S *SIDE*, HIS FEEBLE MIND CHURNING IN *CONFUSION*...

WHY DOES SHE JUST *LIE* THERE?

IS SHE *HURT*?

HAS *HE* SOMEHOW HURT HER?

HE DOES NOT *KNOW*.

THERE IS SO *MUCH* HE DOES NOT KNOW

BUT OF *ONE* THING, AT AT LEAST, HE IS *CERTAIN*--

--IF *HE* CANNOT HELP HIS PRETTY YOUNG FRIEND... HE WILL *FIND* SOMEONE WHO *CAN*!

LIKE SOME NIGHT-BORN *PREDATOR*, THE BAT-MAN SOARS HIGH OVER *GOTHAM*--

--MAKING INFINITELY BETTER *TIME* THAN EVEN THE *FASTEST* POLICE CAR OR AMBULANCE!

BELOW HIM, THE SNOW-COVERED STREETS ARE FILLED WITH LIGHT AND LOVE AND *LAUGHTER*--

--AND THE MASKED MAN WONDERS AT THE *IRONY* OF A YOUNG GIRL WISHING TO END HER LIFE EVEN AS THE WHOLE WORLD *CELEBRATES* ANOTHER LIFE'S *BEGINNING*--

--BUT HE DOES NOT HAVE *TIME* TO WONDER *LONG*...

THIS IS THE *ADDRESS*-- BUT SOMETHING'S *WRONG*!

THE FRONT DOOR HAS BEEN *TORN* CLEAN OFF ITS *HINGES*!

THE PLACE IS *EMPTY*--

--BUT THERE'S NO SIGN OF A *STRUGGLE*!

MAYBE KATHY CHANGED HER MIND ABOUT *KILLING* HERSELF!

MAYBE SHE JUST DECIDED TO--

NO!

SLEEP EASY CAUTION

IF KATHY TOOK *ENOUGH* OF THESE, I'VE NO TIME TO *WASTE*!

I'VE GOT TO *FIND* THAT GIRL--

--WHILE THERE'S STILL A HOPE OF FINDING HER *ALIVE*!

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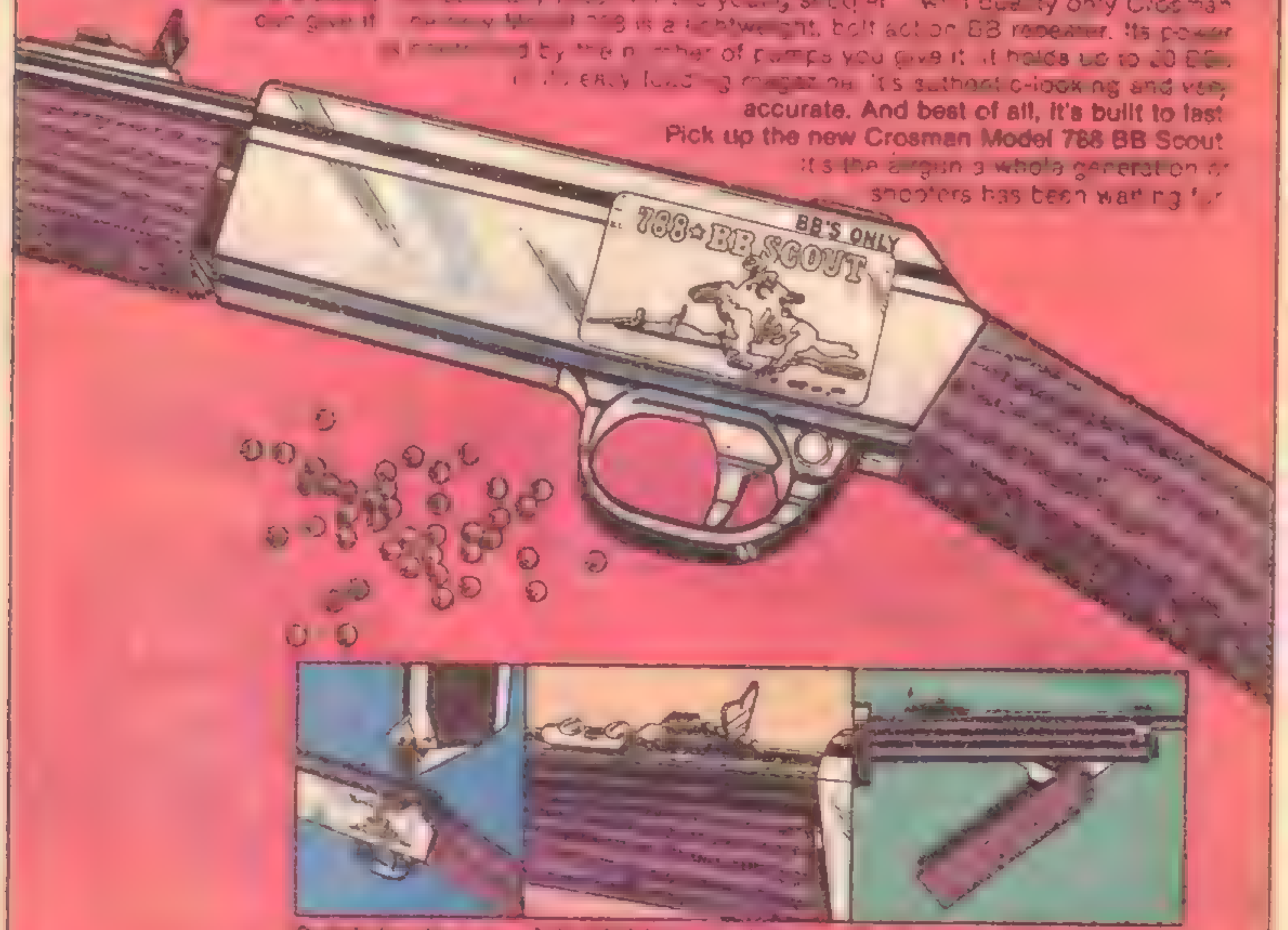

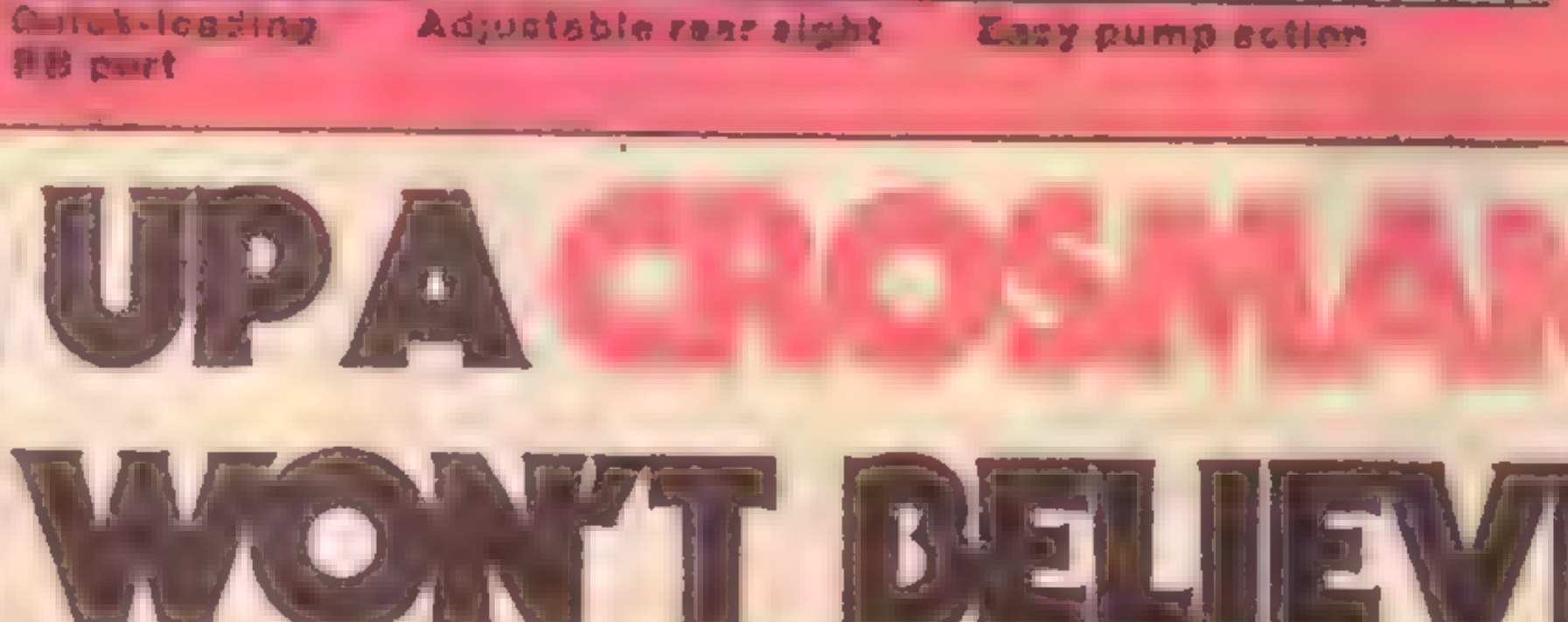

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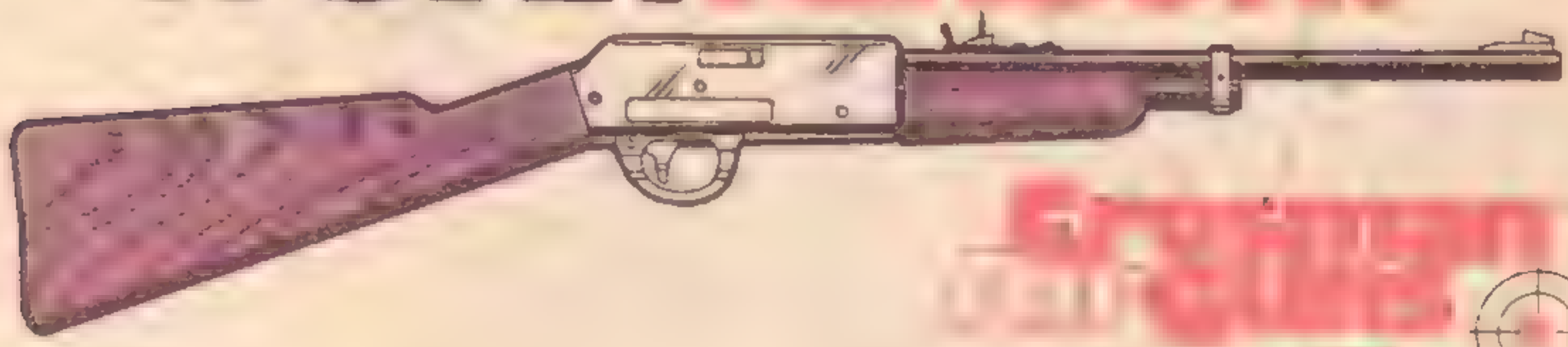

SCOPED!

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IF KATHY WANDERED OFF IN A *DAZE*, THE SNOW-FALL WILL MAKE IT THAT MUCH *EASIER* FOR ME TO *TRACK* HER--

--EH?

I SEE KATHY'S FOOTPRINTS LEADING *TO* THE FRONT DOOR--

"--BUT THE ONLY PRINTS LEADING *AWAY* FROM THE HOUSE ARE MONSTROUSLY *HUGE*--"

"--AND FRIGHTENINGLY *FAMILIAR!*"

BUT IT CAN'T POSSIBLY BE *HIM!* S.T.A.R. TOLD ME HE WAS *DEAD*--

--AND *BURIED!*

GOTHAM MEMORIAL HOSPITAL:

QUIET HOSPITAL ZONE

EVEN ON CHRISTMAS EVE, IT IS *BUSINESS AS USUAL* WITHIN THESE STARK STERILE HALLS...

THE SAVING OF *LIVES* IS, AFTER ALL A *24-HOUR-A-DAY JOB.*

HUDDLED IN THE SHADOWS OF THE *ALLEY* ACROSS THE STREET, A POWERFUL FIGURE STRUGGLES WITH A DESPERATE *DECISION*...

SOMEHOW HE *KNOWS* THIS IS WHERE HE WILL FIND *HELP* FOR THE PRECIOUS *BURDEN* HE CARRIES--

--AND YET THERE ARE *OTHER* MEMORIES-- OF A BUILDING VERY MUCH *LIKE* THIS ONE--

PZZZZZT

--AND OF TERRIBLE MIND-NUMBING *AGONY!*

NO, THE BRUTE DECIDES AT LAST--

--HE CANNOT BRING THE PRETTY ONE TO THIS PLACE OF *PAIN.*

HE WILL SIMPLY HAVE TO FIND *ANOTHER* PLACE TO TAKE HER..

..SOMEWHERE.

BUT MIDWAY BACK ALONG THE *ALLEY*, THE BRUTISH CREATURE ABRUPTLY *PAUSES*--

--AS A SINGULARLY STUNNING *SHADOW* FALLS ACROSS HIS PATH, CUTTING OFF ALL HOPE OF *ESCAPE!*

SO THE FOOTPRINTS DIDN'T *LIE!* IT *IS* YOU-- **BLOCKBUSTER!!**

OBVIOUSLY, *S.T.A.R.'S* EXPERIMENTS DIDN'T REALLY *KILL* YOU AS THEY HAD *THOUGHT!**

NOW WHY DON'T YOU JUST PUT THAT GIRL *DOWN*-- BEFORE SOMEBODY GETS *HURT!*

*LAST ISSUE!--*JULIE*

DESPERATELY, THE MAN-BRUTE TRIES TO *MOTION* THE CAPED FIGURE FROM HIS *PATH* ...

CAN'T HE SEE HOW *SICK* THE GIRL IS?

CAN'T HE SEE THAT SHE NEEDS *HELP?*

BUT THE BATMAN DOES NOT *MOVE*--SO RELUCTANTLY, THE BLOCKBUSTER *DOES!*

THAT'S *BETTER!*

NOW, ONCE WE GET KATHY TO A *HOSPITAL*, WE'LL SEE ABOUT CHANGING *YOU* BACK INTO THE HUMAN *MARK DESMOND!*

NO! NOT THE *HOSPITAL!* IT IS THE PLACE OF *PAIN!* THEY WILL *HURT* THE PRETTY KATHY THERE--

WRUNCH

--UNLESS SOMETHING IS DONE TO *SAVE* HER!

BLOCKBUSTER'S GONE *WILD!*

GOTTA *MOVE*--

CONTINUED ON 5TH PAGE FOLLOWING.

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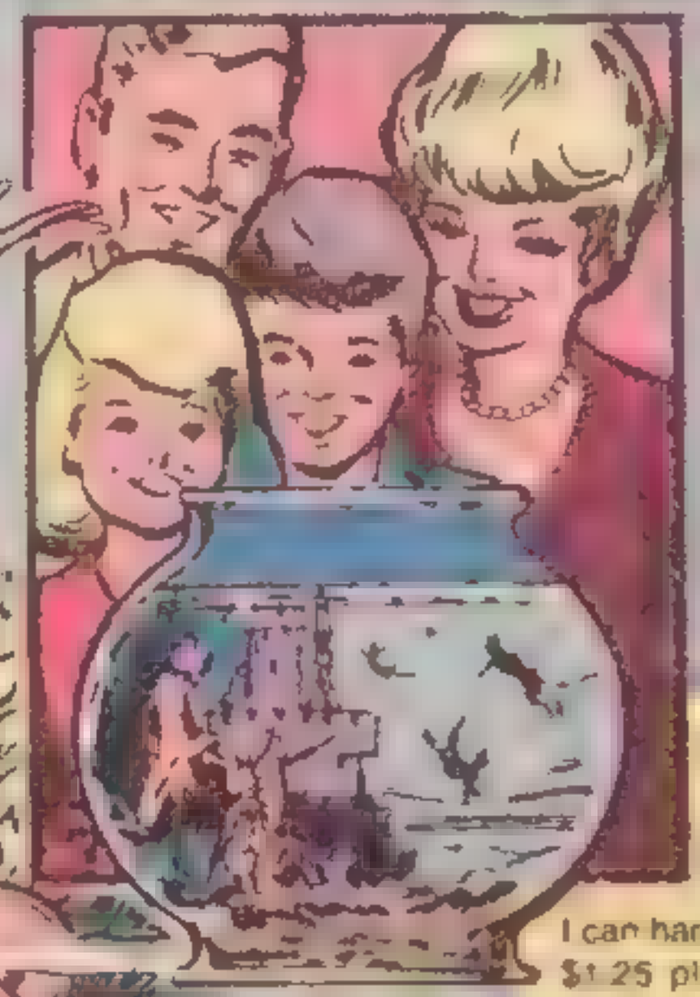

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1938...

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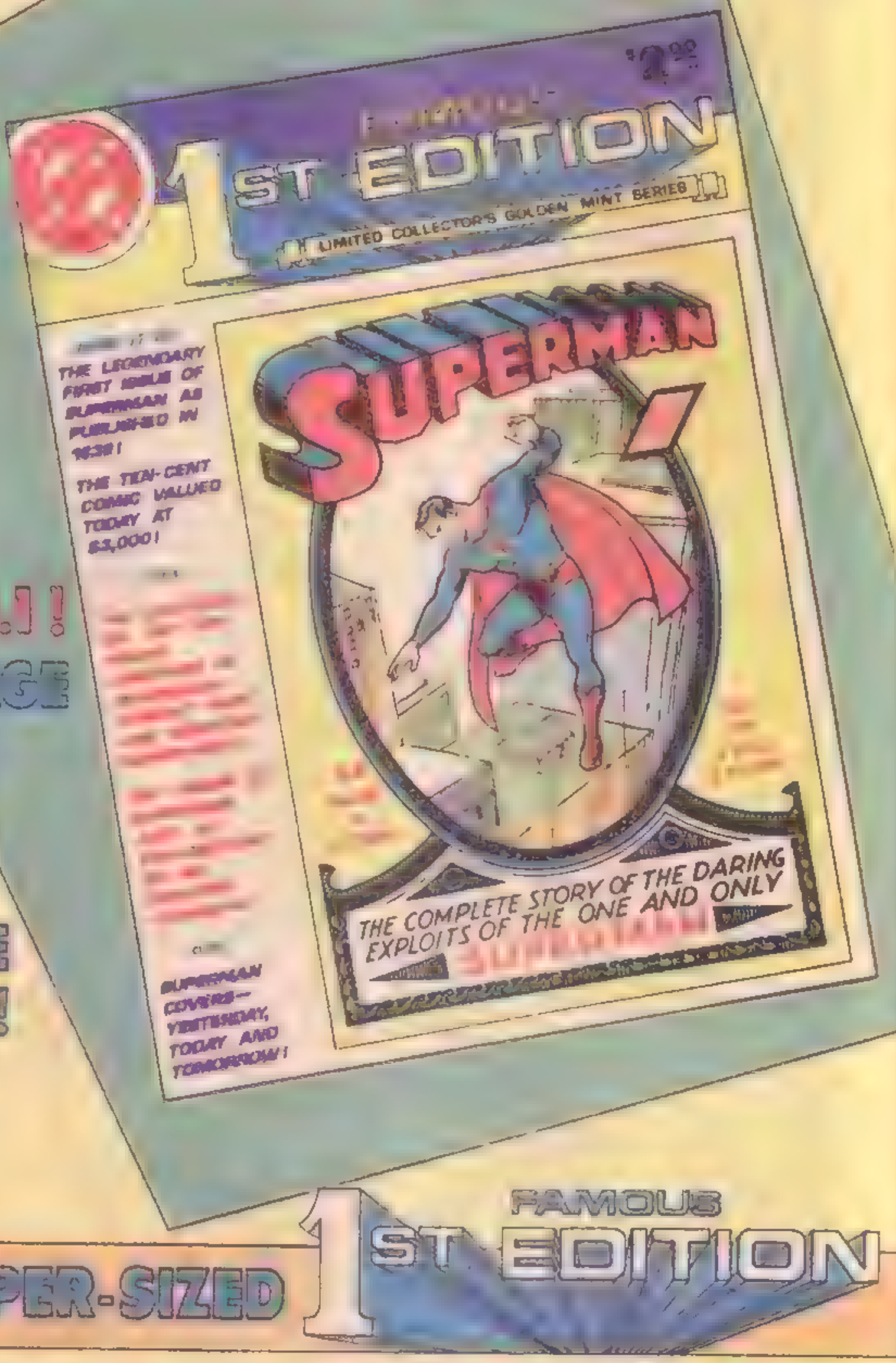
THE GOLDEN AGE FIRST ISSUE OF THE WORLD'S NUMBER ONE SUPER-HERO!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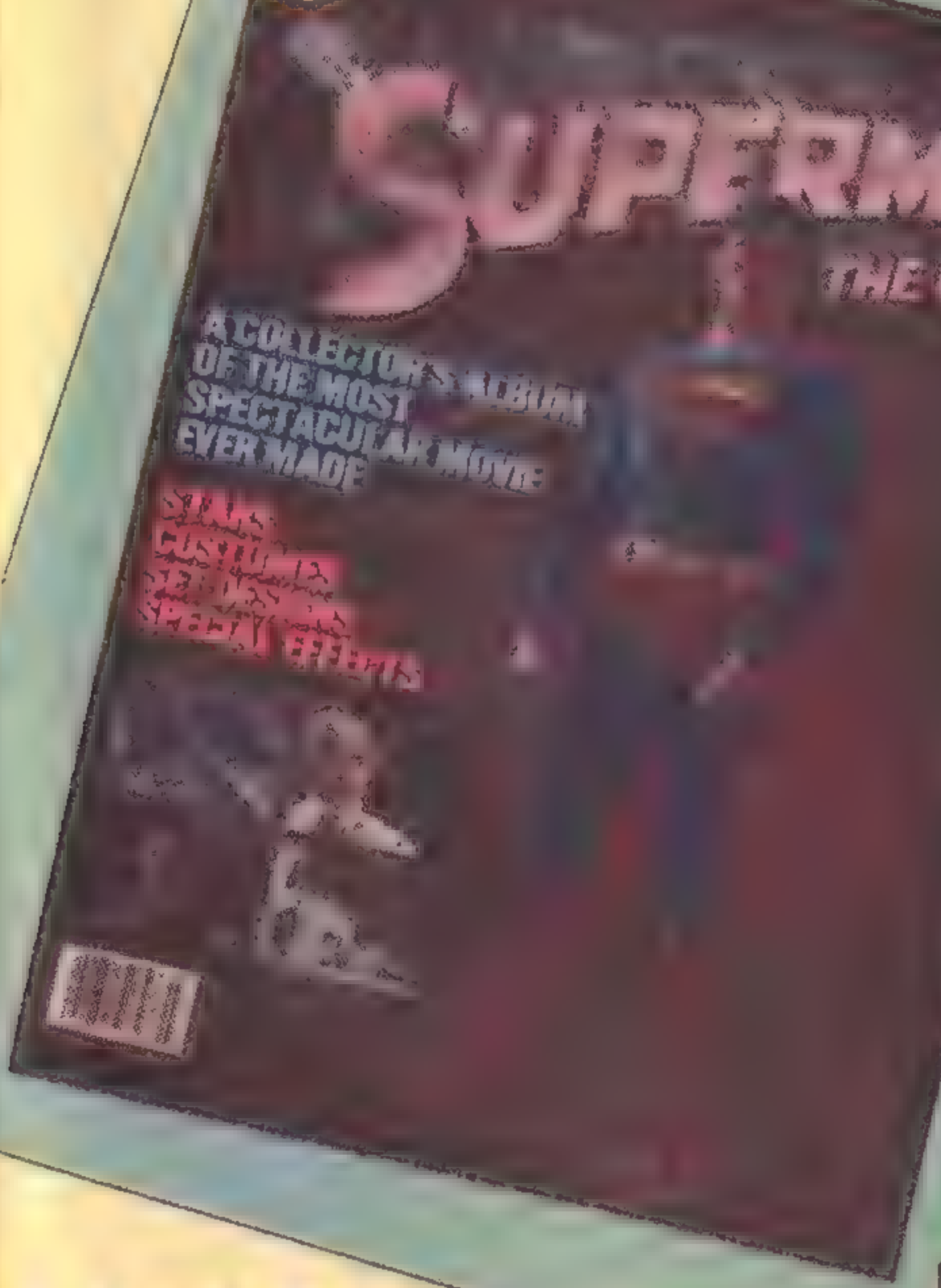

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WHAM

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SO MAYBE THOSE SAME SIDE-EFFECTS HAVE LEFT HIM VULNERABLE TO A GOOD SOLID SOCK IN THE JAW!

WOK

BRAM

SHOULD'VE KNOWN BETTER!

ALL I MANAGED TO DO WAS BRUISE MY FISTS!

AND THE ODDS DO NOT IMPROVE AS THE BATTLE CONTINUES! MASTER OF UNARMED COMBAT THAT HE IS, THE BATMAN PULLS OUT ALL THE STOPS--

THUD

CRAM

WHOOSH

THUMP

--BUT STILL, IT IS HE WHO GETS STOPPED IN THE END!

AND EVEN AS THE BLOCKBUSTER SCOOPS UP THE UNCONSCIOUS *KATHY* AND STALKS OFF, LEAVING A BRUISED AND BATTERED *BATMAN* SPRAWLED IN THE SNOW *BEHIND* HIM...

ANY NEW *WORD* YET, SERGEANT?

I'M AFRAID *NOT*, COMMISSIONER.

SINCE THE *AMBULANCE CREW* CALLED IN TO SAY THEY'D FOUND THAT APARTMENT *EMPTY*, YOU MEAN?

TIME IS *RUNNING* OUT!

BLAST IT, BATMAN--WHERE *ARE* YOU? WHAT IN BLAZES IS *HAPPENING*?

HALF A CITY *AWAY*, THE BLOCKBUSTER *WANDERS* THE SNOW-SLICK STREETS ALMOST *AIMLESSLY*...

WHERE DOES HE GO *NOW*, HE WONDERS?

WHAT CAN HE *DO* TO--

C-C-COLD ...SO *COLD*...

WH-WHERE *AM* I...? WHERE...

NO!

WHO *ARE* YOU? *WHAT* ARE YOU??

BUT THE BLOCKBUSTER CANNOT *REPLY*.

FEEL SO *WEAK*...SO *DIZZY*... JUST WANT TO *SLEEP*...

PLEASE...PUT ME *DOWN*... LET *GO* OF ME...

YOU...

YOU'RE...

...YOU'RE... *CRYING*?

I'M *SORRY*... THOUGHT YOU WANTED TO *HURT* ME. DIDN'T KNOW YOU...

...CARED...

A SOFT *SIGH*, AND KATHY IS *ASLEEP* ONCE MORE.

THE BLOCKBUSTER STALKS ON, *SMILING*.

CONTINUED ON 52ND [illegible]

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SOME SMALL *PART* OF THE BEHEMOTH--PERHAPS ALL THAT REMAINS OF *MARK DESMOND*-- SEEMS TO *RECOGNIZE* THE CHEERFUL BELL-RINGER--

--AND, MORE IMPORTANTLY, SEEMS TO *UNDERSTAND* THAT HERE, AT LAST, IS SOMEONE WHO CAN *HELP* HIM...

...IF *ANYBODY* CAN!

THEN, HESITANTLY, URGENTLY, THE BLOCKBUSTER LUMBERS INTO THE *LIGHT*...

EH? MY GOODNESS, WHAT'S *GOING ON* HERE? I... I...

OH DEAR, THE *GIRL--!* IS SOMETHING *WRONG* WITH WITH HER, MY BOY?

HERE, LET ME TAKE A CLOSER *LOOK* AT-- OH MY, OH *MY!* THIS ISN'T *GOOD*, NOT A *BIT!*

THIS CHILD IS TERRIBLY *ILL!* WE'D BETTER CALL THE *POLICE*--GET HER TO A *HOSPITAL* BEFORE--

RRRRGH!

RRRRGH!

EH?

WH-WHAT DO YOU MEAN *NO?* WE HAVE NO *CHOICE--!*

BUT THE BLOCKBUSTER IS NOT INCLINED TO *ARGUE!*

AND IN AN INSTANT, HE IS ONCE MORE OFF AND *RUNNING!*

POLICE! HELP-- *POLICE!*

YOU'VE GOT TO *STOP* THAT MAN-- BEFORE HE GETS *AWAY!!*

IT'S ALL RIGHT, OFFICERS-- I'LL HANDLE THIS!

ANYTHING YOU SAY, BATMAN--!

BUT IF YOU NEED OUR HELP--!

IF I DO-- I'LL CALL YOU!

THOUGH SOMETHING TELLS ME WE SHOULDN'T HOLD OUR BREATH WAITING!

RUNNING BLINDLY THROUGH THE THICKENING SNOWSTORM, THE BLOCKBUSTER ABRUPTLY STOPS COLD IN HIS TRACKS--

--TO FIND HIS WAY BLOCKED BY AN AWESOME EXPANSE OF CHURNING WATER AND SPRAWLING ICE--

--THE GOTHAM RIVER, FROZEN ON ITS WAY TO THE WAITING SEA!

FOR A MOMENT, THE BEFUDDLED BRUTE HESITATES, UNCERTAIN OF WHAT NEXT TO DO--

--AND THEN THE DECISION IS TAKEN OUT OF HIS HANDS!

OKAY, BLOCKBUSTER-- THAT'S JUST ABOUT FAR ENOUGH!

ONE WAY OR THE OTHER, IT'S TIME WE PUT AN END TO THIS!

RAGE FILLS THE BEHEMOTH'S HEART AS THE BATMAN MOVES TOWARD HIM. HE WANTS TO SMASH THIS CAPED INTRUDER, AND BE DONE WITH HIM FOREVER--

--BUT THERE IS STILL THE *GIRL* TO THINK ABOUT...

THERE IS ALWAYS THE *GIRL!*

BLOCKBUSTER-- *COME BACK!!*

BEHIND HIM, HIS CAPED PURSUER STANDS *WAITING*--

--THUS THERE IS NOWHERE TO GO BUT *FORWARD!*

ARRRR

WHAM

THE ICE *SPLINTERS* BENEATH THE BLOCKBUSTER'S PONDEROUS *WEIGHT*--

--BUT IT *HOLDS!*

HE MUST BE *OUT OF HIS MIND!*

CRAK

I'VE GOT TO BRING HIM *DOWN*--BEFORE HE *KILLS* HIMSELF AND THE *GIRL!*

THE *DARKNIGHT DETECTIVE* LANDS ON THE BLOCKBUSTER'S BACK LIKE A RUN-AWAY *WRECKING BALL...*

GRIK-CRACK

CRACK

THERE'S NO WAY THAT ICE WILL HOLD HIM ALL THE WAY *ACROSS* TO THE OTHER *SIDE!*

GRIK GRIK CRACK

THE BEHEMOTH *STAGGERS*, DROPPING THE UNCONSCIOUS *KATHY*--

--AND THEN HE GOES *BERSERK!*

CRACK

THE BLOCKBUSTER HAD TRIED TO *AVOID* THIS, BUT THE CAPED ONE KEPT *HUNTING* HIM, KEPT *HOUNDING* HIM--

--AND NOW THE CAPED ONE MUST *SUFFER* FOR IT!!

WHUM

WHILE, *UNNOTICED* BY THE TWO COMBATANTS...

WH-WHAT'S *HAPPENING?* WHERE...?

NO! I'M ON AN *ICE FLOE*-- DRIFTING *DOWN-RIVER!*

WH-WHAT DO I DO *NOW*--?

HELP ME! PLEASE, SOMEONE-- *HELP ME!!*

KHOOM

SKRICK-GRACK-CRRK

BLOCKBUSTER *WHIRLS* AT THE SOUND, THE BATTLE INSTANTLY *FORGOTTEN*--

--IN LIEU OF MORE *IMPORTANT* THINGS!

HUUHH-RRR

MUSCLES BUNCHING, THE BLOCKBUSTER *LEAPS*--

HOK

R-UHH

--HIS DEEP-SET EYES *FIXED* ON THE TERRIFIED FEATURES OF THE *GIRL* HE HAS GONE THROUGH SO MUCH TO *PROTECT!*

CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING

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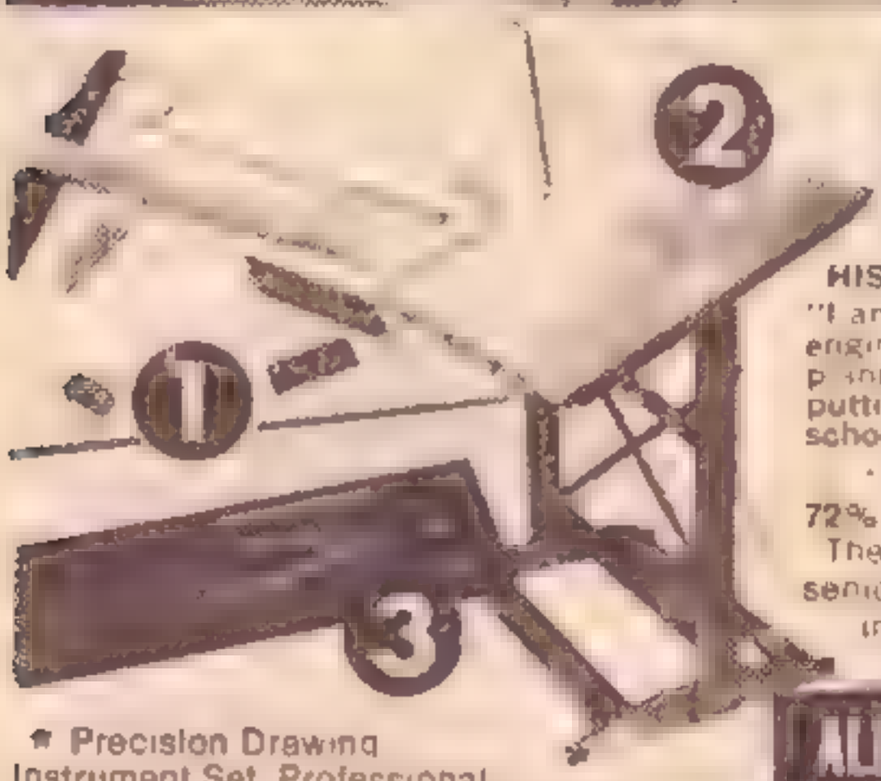

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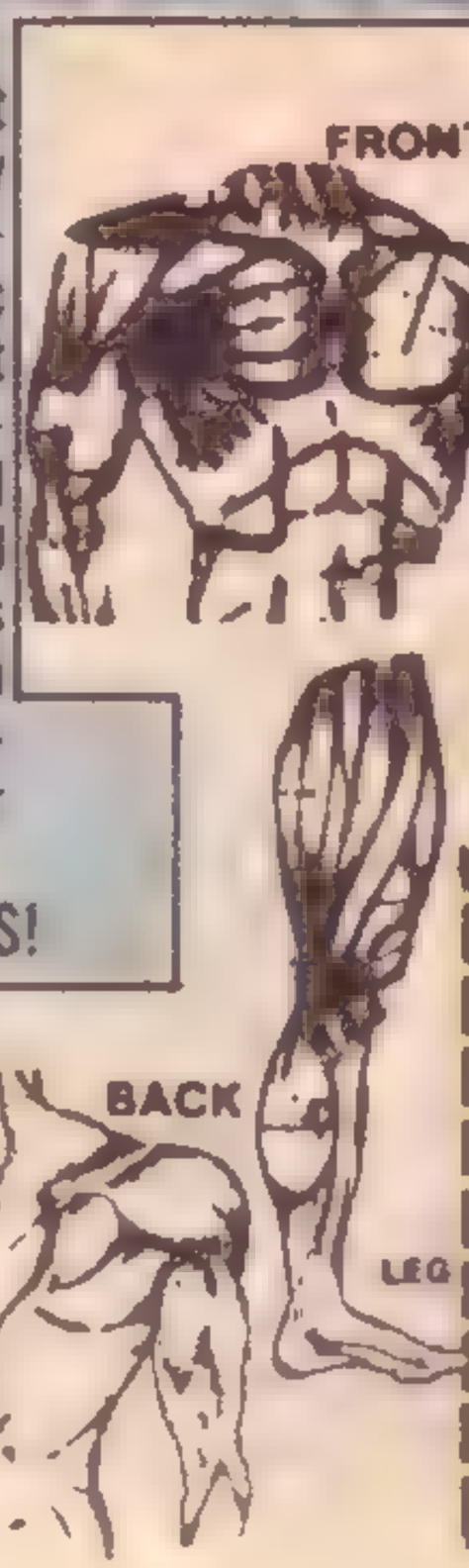

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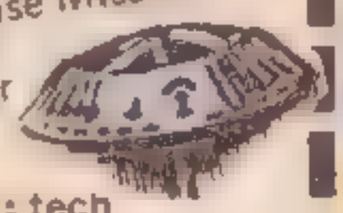

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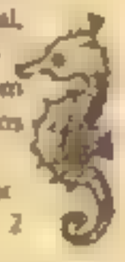

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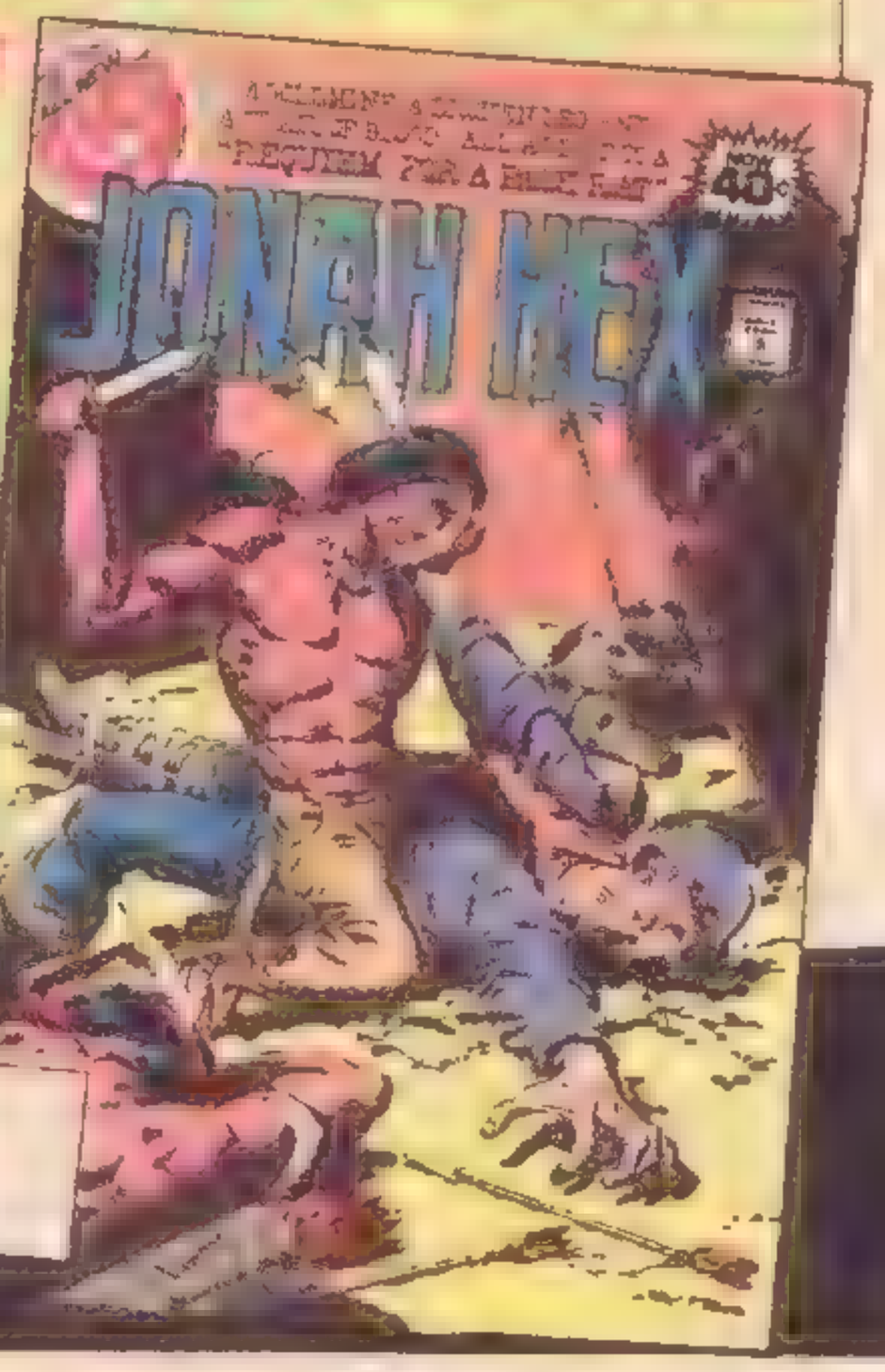

BOTH ON SALE THIS MONTH!

HE WILL NOT -- HE *CANNOT*-- FAIL THE PRETTY ONE *NOW!*

KATHY *RECOILS* AS THE DESPERATE BLOCKBUSTER *LANDS* ON THE CRUMBLING ICE BEFORE HER...

WHAM

SHE *FLINCHES* AS HE HOLDS OUT HIS MISSHAPEN *HANDS* TO HER...

CRIK-CRIK CRACK

BUT THERE IS SOMETHING IN THE MAN-BRUTE'S *EYES*-- A *TENDERNESS*, AN UTTER *DEVOTION*--THAT *TOUCHES* THE TERRIFIED GIRL...

...AND, WITHOUT HESITATION, SHE *COMES* TO HIM!

FOR AN INSTANT, THE BLOCKBUSTER HOLDS HER *CLOSE*, SAVORING THE TOUCH OF HER *TEARS* AGAINST HIS CHEST--

CRACK! CRACK CRACK

--THEN, HIS *HEART* ALL BUT *BREAKING*, HE FLINGS HER TENDERLY *AWAY*--

CRACK

A MOMENT LATER, THE ICE FLOE IS *GONE*--

--TAKING THE BLOCK-BUSTER *WITH* IT DOWN TO THE COLD, DARK *DEPTHS!*

--INTO THE WAITING *ARMS* OF AN UNDERSTANDING *BATMAN!*

AND...

IS THE GIRL *ALL RIGHT*, BATMAN?

BARELY, COMMISSIONER! BUT IF THAT BOTTLE HAD CONTAINED JUST A FEW PILLS *MORE*...

THAT POOR *MAN*--! HE SACRIFICED HIS *LIFE* FOR ME--ME, A *NOBODY* WHO WAS TRYING TO *KILL* HERSELF!

OBVIOUSLY, *HE* THOUGHT YOU HAD A LOT TO *LIVE* FOR! ARE YOU GOING TO MAKE A *LIAR* OUT OF HIM?

YOU MEAN, AM I GOING TO TRY TO *KILL* MYSELF AGAIN?

NO, THERE'S BEEN *ENOUGH* DEATH ALREADY TONIGHT...

... *MORE* THAN ENOUGH!

HE *SAW* SOMETHING IN ME-- SOMETHING WORTH *SAVING*!

I THINK I'LL KEEP *TRYING* TILL I FIND OUT *WHAT* THAT SOMETHING *WAS*!

THAT'S ALL HE COULD HAVE *ASKED* FOR, KATHY!

IT'S SO *STRANGE*, BATMAN. HE *DIED*, FOR ME--AND I NEVER EVEN KNEW HIS *NAME*!

WHO *WAS* HE?

IS IT *IMPORTANT*? WHY NOT JUST CALL HIM *THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMASES YET-TO-BE*!

GOOD-BYE, KATHY... AND *GOOD LUCK*!

THEN, AS THE AMBULANCE *HOWLS* OFF INTO THE NIGHT...

DO YOU THINK SHE'LL *MAKE* IT THIS TIME, BATMAN?

IF THERE'S ANY *JUSTICE* IN THIS WORLD, COMMISSIONER ...IF THERE'S ANY *JUSTICE*!

AND A SINGLE BURNING *STAR* IN THE SKY LIGHTS THEIR WAY *HOME*.

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Dear Editor,

BATMAN #303 pleased me a lot!

The Unsolved Case, "If Justice Be Served", was just the kind of stuff I've always loved Denny O'Neil for—that grim-visaged and complex character called **The Batman** really is a living man in Denny's stories and his mistakes are almost always believable and incredibly effective plot devices. Michael Golden's art seemed a little "flatter" than usual, but there were still some spots which had that subtle touch of greatness he can achieve when he puts his attention into more than snazzy layouts.

"Batman's Great Identity Switch" had less "genius" but in the end it was a more satisfactory tale from the standpoint of both originality and the kind of humor which can only be developed in the plots of a character as well-known as *The Batman*. The twists and turns of the identity-switch left me alternately worried for the hero's safety and laughing at his bizarre "affliction". It's not the kind of story you can do on a regular basis, but as a one-shot it was a gas and a half. Thanks for a lot of pleasure.

CAT YRONWODE
Route 1, Box 43
Mountain Grove, MO 65711

* * * * *

Dear Gothamites,

Almost 80% of the letters I write to *DC* seem to be pure praise. I know it gets monotonous, but there seems so little to criticize these days.

BATMAN #304 was no exception! *The Spook* is the only villain I know of who is *Batman's* equal in brain, brawn and skill. The vast variety of psychological snares he consistently conceives never ceases to entertain and the double-death deal in "To Hell With Batman—and Back" tops the lot. A tip of the cowl to David V. Reed.

The untold flashbacks from "The Amazing Secret of Dr. Dundee" added some interesting insights to the legend of *The Batman*. I assume, due to the absence of footnotes, that this was Dr. Douglas Dundee's first appearance . . . and I hope it was far from his last. This is a character who is most definitely an important addition to the cast.

ROBERT A. BUETHE
226 Hathaway Avenue
Elmont, NY 11003

BATMAN #304 was the debut of Dr. Dundee . . . and we all agree with you on the importance of his introduction!—BR

* * * * *

Dear Julie,

I've just read the *BATMAN SPECTACULAR* and it certainly was! (A "spectacular", that is!)

"Hang the Batman" was a very good David V. Reed script complemented by good artwork by Mike Nasser and Joe Rubinstein. Although I am partial to the work of Marshall Rogers, I found it graphically gripping and the script thorough and spellbinding.

"I Now Pronounce You Batman and Wife" was another touch of the O'Neil mystique, but don't you think there are getting to be too many people who know *Batman's* dual identity? *Ra's al Ghul* is a great villain but there are too many question marks about his background. Let this be his last appearance for awhile. Mike Golden is a fine artist and Dick Giordano's inks enhanced his work.

"A dynamic approach!" That's what I call "Death Strikes at Midnight and Three!" How about doing this on a regular basis? Gardner Fox worked wonders with the text story on *Adam Strange* several years ago and now Denny O'Neil has given us a whole new side of *The Batman*. This story greatly held my interest and attention and I found it a welcome change. Artwise, Marshall Rogers couldn't have been topped. Let's have this team joined for another tale of this kind.

DAVE KALIS
7570 Byron Place
Clayton, MO 63105

* * * * *

Dear Editor:

The only clue I could find as to the identity of Mrs. Grayson in *BATMAN* #300 were the names of the children, Bruce and James. Could the latter be named after his grandfather, James W. Gordon? Whether I'm right or wrong, I hope you get around to printing the answer in the letter column.

MARK PRINCIPE
3145 SW 124th Ct.
Miami, FL 33176

And without saying another word on the subject, we nod and tell you that we just printed the correct answer!—BR

* * * * *

FINAL BOW DEPARTMENT: This issue marks Julie Schwartz's last as editor of BATMAN! After almost 15 years of handling the Caped Crusader and piloting a revitilization of the character, an editorial reorganization moves this magazine (and DETECTIVE and BRAVE & BOLD) into the hands of Paul Levitz, who takes over next issue. And before you start worrying, Julie will still be with us, handling virtually all of Superman's magazines: SUPERMAN, ACTION, SUPERMAN FAMILY, DC COMICS PRESENTS and SUPER FRIENDS! Read them all . . . and we promise you only the best in comics!—Bob Rozakis

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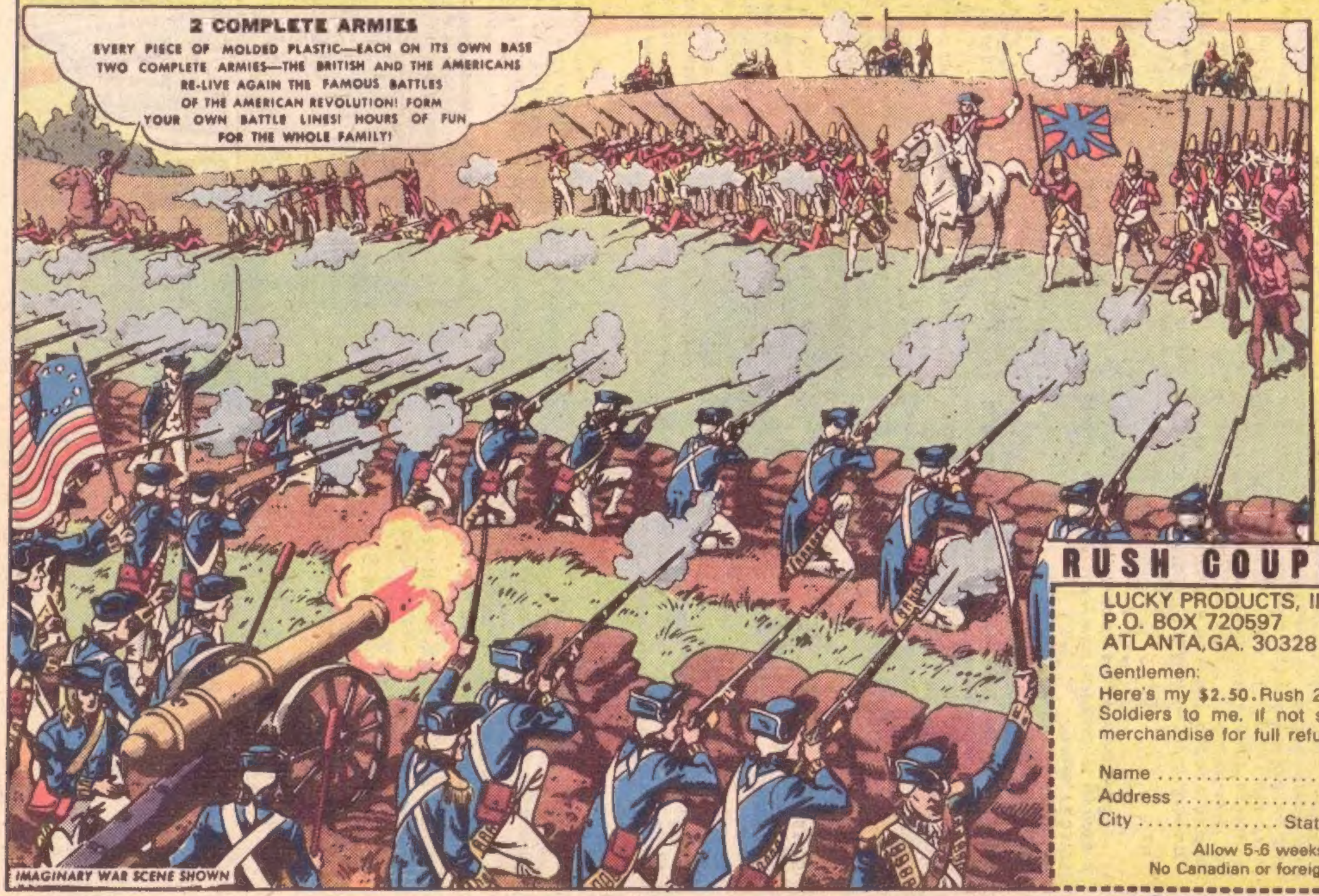

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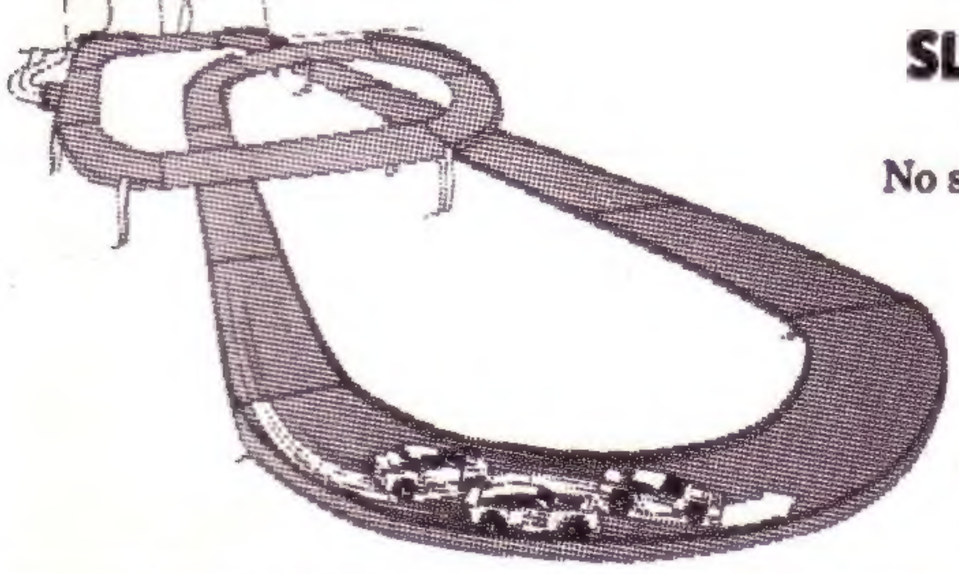

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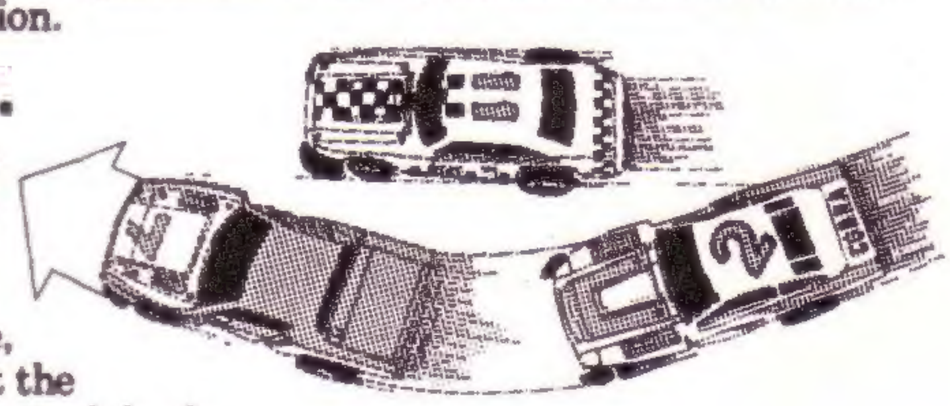

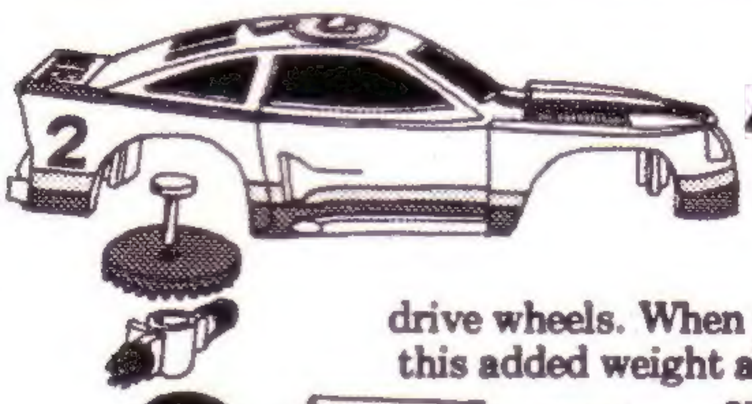

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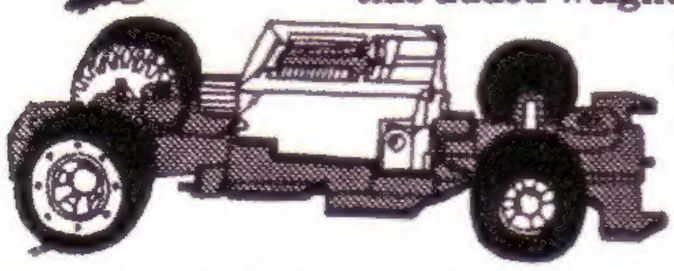

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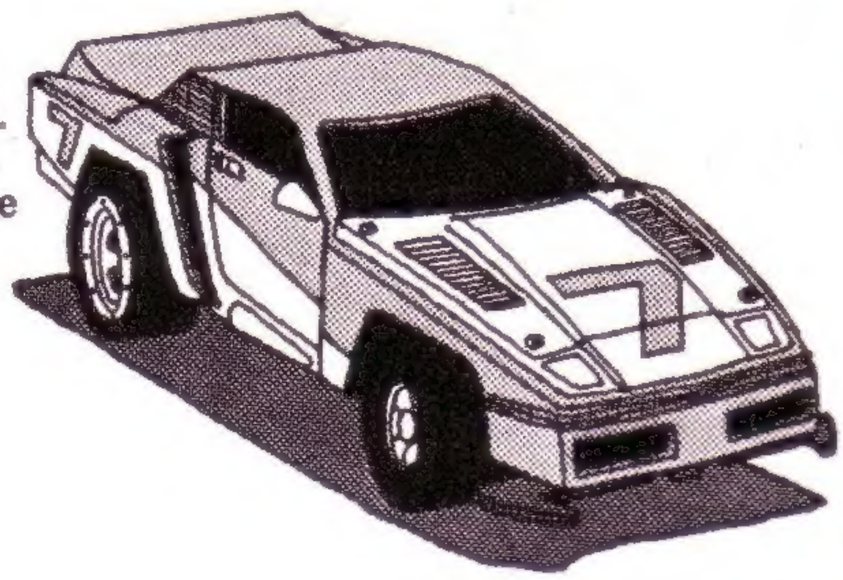

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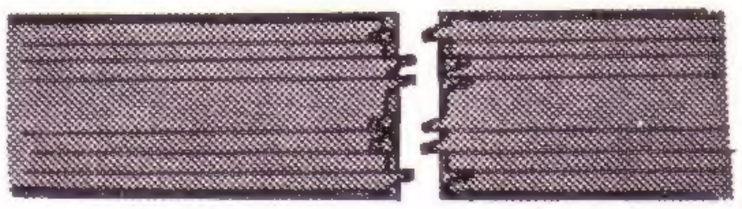

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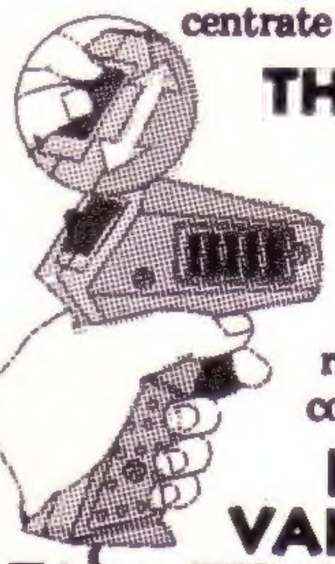

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